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# THE NORTHERN ILLINOIS STATE NORMAL SCHOOL QUARTERLY

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DeKalb, Illinois



HINTS FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS

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# **The Northern Illinois State Normal School Quarterly**

**DeKalb, Illinois**

## **HINTS FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS**

**LIDA BROWN McMURRY**

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Northern Illinois State Normal School**





## HINTS FOR PRIMARY TEACHERS.

LIDA BROWN McMURRY

Supervisor Primary Grades.

The teacher in the primary grades must keep constantly in mind the importance of her pupils forming good habits which they will need to guide their actions now and throughout their lives. In all of her instruction, in all of her intercourse with the children, and in all of her discipline she must strive to lead her pupils to form these good habits, viz:

1. Attention.
2. Thinking for themselves.
3. Doing for themselves.
4. Inquiring about anything which they do not understand.
5. Carefulness.
6. Appreciating the beautiful in nature, in pictures, in stories, in poems, in Bible verses, in songs.
7. Appreciating humor.
8. Self-control.
9. Cheerful, hearty obedience.
10. Truthfulness.
11. Thoughtfulness for others.
12. Politeness.
13. Respect for authority, for the flag, for aged people.

All the suggestions which follow are given to aid the pupils in forming these habits.

### General Management in the Schoolroom.

1. If you keep every child profitably and happily employed every minute, trouble with discipline will be lightened.

2. Pupils should, at a signal from the teacher, all rise immediately on the right side of the desk.

3. Pupils should not clamor to lead their rows as the classes pass. Make them feel that this is a matter of no consequence.

4. No time should be wasted in passing classes. They should move promptly and as rapidly as is consistent with good order.

5. Make each direction clear and definite; and give it but once, but be sure that every child hears it. Deafness may be the cause of failure to follow a direction. Make sure this is not the case before you deal with a child.

6. See every child in the room.

7. Expect the pupils to do what is right.
8. Do not make noise to stop noise, such as clapping hands and pounding on the desk, talking in a loud voice.
9. Hesitation and unpreparedness are fatal to good order.
10. Watch your voice. Speak distinctly but quietly. Speak with decision when necessary, but not loudly.
11. Laugh with the pupils when something occurs which is really funny but no one should laugh boisterously.
12. Train the pupils to take themselves in hand and make themselves mind. Make them feel the responsibility of having a body to control, e. g. "You cannot make your lips mind. What do you think of such a captain?"
13. Use Bible verses, fables, and other short stories bearing on conduct at a time when needed as influencers. Give them sympathetically and let the pupils do the applying.
14. Pupils should correct one another, in a polite way, for speaking when another is talking.
15. If wisely managed it is sometimes well for a school to pass judgment on an offending party.
16. Choose opportune times for teaching new poems and songs, and for reviewing old ones, e. g. "The Snow Man", when there is plenty of snow.
17. Plan seat work carefully. Be sure that the pupils know how to do what you give them to do. It should be interesting and worth while. There should be no work given simply to fill up time. Give enough work to occupy the pupils for the whole period. Look at the seat work after it is done and hold pupils responsible for the best and neatest work that they can do.
18. Give pupils plenty of fresh air to help them to do their work, but never allow the wind to blow upon their backs, and never allow them to sit in a draft.
19. The eyes of the children should be protected from the strong light, and the rays of the sun should never fall on the books or papers which they are using.
20. The teacher must also see that the pupils have plenty of light so as to avoid eye-strain.
21. The light should never come into the room at such an angle as to cast a shadow on the paper on which the child is writing.
22. The chairs of the pupils should not be placed close together as the closeness promotes nervousness.
23. Pupils should sit erect when they sit and stand erect when they stand.
24. When pupils are tired mentally they must have rest. Play a quick game, sing a lively song, or give some other exercise which will be restful, then go back to better thinking and doing.
25. Enter into the spirit of the song you are singing, the poem or Bible verse which you are teaching, or the book you are reading so as to take the pupils with you. Their faces, as well as yours, should express the spirit of the exercise.

26. Know a poem, verse, or song before teaching it to the pupils so that you can enter fully into its spirit untrammelled by attention to the words.

27. In teaching a poem or a song do not give it over and over any one day, giving pupils an idea that it is a thing to be hammered at, instead of a beautiful gem.

28. Prepare for the teaching of a new song or a poem by calling up the children's experiences in connection with the thought of the poem; e. g., have pupils notice shadows at different times of day and at night before giving Stevenson's "My Shadow."

29. Be careful of mannerisms and of set phrases such as "Good!" "All right!" "Ye es!"

30. Train pupils to own up at once when the teacher asks, "Who did this?"

31. Teach pupils to be thoughtful of the rights of others, and to be polite always.

32. The pupils should have pride in a neat schoolroom and desks, and hold themselves responsible for them.

33. Pupils should not play with objects on or in their desks while the teacher is reading to them. See that you have the attention of all. If not, stop the interesting reading, and look at the offender, not angrily, but so as to make him feel that he is interrupting the reading.

34. You go *so far*, not *that far*, or *this far*; you should say: "Do as I do," not "Do like I do". You go *into a room*, not *in a room*. It is not *real cold*, or *awfully cold*, but *cold*, or *very cold*. "Who thinks *he* can do this?" not "Who thinks they can do this?"

35. Pupils should be taught to ask politely for things which they wish.

36. When playing games in which blind-folding is necessary have a separate cover for each pair of eyes to prevent spread of disease. Paper covers can be used.

36. Do not fall into the pernicious practice of excusing yourself for failure to do your duty.

## Preparation for Instruction in a Class.

1. Teachers should make thorough and full preparation for the recitations of the day.

2. They should look through the lessons and gather, beforehand, material which will be needed, so as not to be rushed just before the recitation period.

3. They should know how to pronounce correctly all words in the lessons.

4. Remember that it is well-directed, careful effort on the part of the children which you are seeking and do not put undue emphasis on results.

## General Suggestions for the Instruction Period.

1. Know exactly what you are to do in each recitation, begin promptly, and move along with quiet energy, giving pupils no time for their thoughts to wander.

2. At the beginning of most recitations an interesting and inclusive statement of what they are to accomplish should be given to the pupils; e. g., if the pupils are having the story of "The King of the Golden River" the teacher will say: "To-day we shall find whether or not the river turned to gold for Schwartz," or the teacher may ask the pupils what they wish to find out, and they will say: "We wish to find whether or not the river turned to gold for Schwartz."

3. See the whole class. Work with the whole class, not with one individual at a time, and see that all think.

4. Study the interests of the pupils and, so far as is good for them, shape your work accordingly. Drop work that does not appeal to the class, or mend your method of presenting it if that is at fault, or look to the physical condition of the uninterested child.

5. There should be variety in the recitations with the little children. Do not keep them on one kind of work until they weary of it.

6. Efface yourself so far as is wise in a recitation. The pupils should do the work but you must quietly listen.

7. Use all the illustrative material needed. It does not pay to skimp in this respect.

8. Show objects rather than pictures if they can be obtained.

9. As a rule do not show a little picture to a class making it necessary to pass it to each individual. In such a case most of the time of the pupils is wasted.

10. It is our business to make things real to the child so that he shall live in the school. To this end, see to it that he images correctly and clearly whenever imaging is needed.

11. Avoid direct questions. They do not, as a rule, provoke thought. If asked, they should be followed up by When? Where? Why? or How?

12. Do not ask a question in the negative so as to suggest the positive to the child or vice versa, e. g., "Was he cross?" to get the child to say that he was kind; or "Did he leave his master?" to get from the child that he was faithful to his master.

13. Do not answer a question in the asking, e. g., "We have here the length and the breadth of the sled runner, haven't we?"

14. Do not repeat the answers of the children.

15. Do not blame pupils for ignorance, but help them out of it. Do not say in disgust, "Don't you know that?", but remember there are many things which we ought to know and do not know.

16. If a pupil does not know a fact which he is asked to give e. g., the spelling of a word, an addition fact, the sound of a letter, a word in reading, see that he masters this obstacle by very frequent reviews.

17. Drills should be short and quick and should make pupils ready with the facts. Every day should show gain in mastery of facts.



18. Do not minimize a child's contribution to a recitation if what he gives is sincerely presented.

19. A child should not be told to do a piece of work over again unless he understands definitely what was wrong with the first attempt and knows how to improve on the weak places.

20. Do not pump at an empty well—trying to get from a child a statement of a fact which he does not possess.

21. Do not say to a pupil, "You may try to do that," but tell him to do it, showing thoroughly your confidence in his ability.

22. Insist on correct language from the pupils in all their recitations, but do it in such a way as not to kill interest. Steer tactfully between the rocks here.

23. Remember that it is our business to educate the whole child, not his intellect alone, but his emotions and his will.

24. Study to help the child in such a way that he shall become more and more able to help himself.

25. Teach pupils to wait on themselves; e. g., if one needs a chair he should get it and not wait for the teacher to get it for him.

26. At close of every recitation the teacher should be able to note definite progress made by the pupils.

27. The pupils, too, should be conscious of steady growth in each subject. Sometimes at the close of a recitation ask pupils what they have learned.

28. See that the pupils have done all that they can for themselves before the teacher helps out.

29. Lead pupils to say, "I do not know" when that is the case. They should never bluff nor guess.

30. Teach pupils not to say, "I do not know," without having given thought to the subject. This statement should not be a cloak for laziness.

31. Teach pupils to have respect for a book—to have care not to tear the leaves, soil its pages, hold it clumsily, or bend back the covers.

31. Insist on pupils talking to the point and lead them to pass judgment upon their classmates who wander from it.

32. No pupil should interrupt another pupil or the teacher who is talking. Insist upon this. The one talking presumably has a right to the floor and it is discourteous and selfish to interrupt him.

## Suggestions for Bettering the Teaching of Special Subjects.

### STORY TELLING

1. Know a story well and live it before giving it to your pupils.

2. Have all the illustrative material necessary to make the pictures accurate and clear.

3. Live the story with the pupils.

4. In telling the story do not go faster than the pupils can image what you give.

5. In developing a story accept with appreciation what the pupils suggest though it be not just the thing that you would like for them to give.
6. In developing a story do not ask the pupils questions which they could not reasonably be expected to answer.
7. Lead pupils to ask questions freely about the story.
8. Connect incidents in the story with similar incidents in other stories, and with their own experiences.
9. If any word is used in telling the story, the meaning of which the children do not know, they should ask the meaning.
10. When a new word comes up in a story incorporate it into your speech until the word and its meaning are familiar to the pupils.
11. Encourage pupils to express themselves freely, by use of their hands, their feet and their bodies as well as by their voices.
12. Pupils should be allowed to dramatize their stories in their own way.
13. Review stories often. A few stories well learned and well loved are far better than many stories given once and never referred to again.
14. In reproducing a long story, have the topics written upon the board in order, and let each child talk upon a topic.

## READING

1. Have all the illustrative material necessary to make the pictures correct and clear.
2. Study the picture at the head of the lesson for two purposes; first, that of arousing interest in the lesson, second, that of introducing the new words in the lesson. These words are written upon the board as the children use them in describing the picture. They are reviewed in such a way as to associate the word or the phrase with the idea which it expresses, thus, "Find at the board the word that tells where the chickens were." The child points to "*in the yard*".

In studying the picture do not direct the child's attention to objects not spoken of in the lesson.

Study the picture as a whole; it tells a story. It is not well simply to enumerate the objects in the picture without relating them, as this leads to a wrong idea of a picture.

3. Print on slips of manila cardboard words commonly missed by the pupils, such as, could, would, should, when, where, how; and give a short quick drill on these before beginning to read. These slips should be of uniform size.

4. Play a game before reading about how it is played.
5. Make an object if possible before reading a description of how it is made.
6. If pupils come to a lesson not suitable for the present season they should suggest leaving it out until a more suitable time.
7. The teacher reads a difficult poem to the pupils, at first without comment, giving them an idea of the beauty of the poem as a whole.

After this it is taken up stanza by stanza, the pupils asking questions about anything they do not understand, then the pupils may read it if they can read it well, if not, the teacher may read it again and then leave it for the present.

Often the teacher needs to give the setting for the poem (e. g., the story of how it came to be written) before she reads the poem.

8. *Read, read, read* in the reading class. Do not waste time in unprofitable discussions, or in talks which throw no light upon the lesson.

9. Train pupils so they will not be willing to read anything which they do not understand but will ask for the meaning.

10. When questions requiring an answer are asked in the book the pupils direct them to different members of the class.

11. When action is called for in a lesson the pupils do as commanded without the prompting of the teacher.

12. Ask the pupil to read all the book says about a certain topic assigned, or all that a character in a story says. Pupils correct him if he does not read all that he should.

13. Ask sometimes, "What does the next paragraph tell about?"

14. Pupils ask a classmate the meaning of any passage which he has been reading and which they do not understand.

15. After a dialogue has been read through, or a story in which there is much conversation, pupils re-read, taking the parts of the different characters, each child picking out for himself the part he should read and watching for his turn to read.

16. So far as possible divide the reading lesson into units, letting each child read one; this avoids a break in the thought. It cannot always be done.

17. The pupils should connect in thought the reading of today with that of some previous time, or with what they have heard or seen.

18. Pupils should not hesitate or stumble in reading. If the lesson is difficult the pupils should study silently a sentence or a paragraph at a time before reading aloud.

19. If you have a poor reader in the class give him the short, easy portions to read, call upon him often but do not have him read much at a time. Help him continually to the power to sound out words for himself.

20. As soon as the pupils know the sounds of letters and phonograms they should be forced to use them in picking out for themselves new words. You will need to ask sometimes, "To what family does this word belong?"

21. If the child comes to a name which he does not know, do not ask a question about the object in order to call up its name, for this will not help him to recognize the word the next time he sees it; e. g., What is that animal in the picture? to get the word *lion*. If the child cannot sound the word tell it to him so that his attention will not be taken from the thought in the reading.

22. When a child comes to a word the meaning of which he may not know do not take the word out of its setting in the sentence by asking "What does that word mean?" but ask for the meaning of the phrase or

sentence in which it is used, e. g., in the sentence, "The elephants were alarmed", do not ask, "What does alarmed mean?" but, "How did the elephants feel when they were alarmed?"

23. Pupils ask for a word by giving its number and the number of the line in which it is found, e. g., third word in second line, or word three in line two.

24. Words which are not in the child's vocabulary should be told to him as soon as he asks for them. He might not be able to give them were he to sound them.

25. Give a pupil an opportunity to correct a word which he has mis-called. Do not interrupt him while he is reading. Corrections can be made when he is through. He will probably make them himself if he is let alone.

26. Look to it that the pupils pronounce words distinctly.

27. Lead pupils to read in a natural tone of voice.

28. Teach pupils how to hold the book when reading—in left hand, (if not too heavy) leaving the right hand free to turn the leaves.

29. Teach pupils how to turn the leaves of a book—turn the upper corner.

30. To get the pupils to grasp a number of words at a glance, phrases containing familiar words are written in a column on the board and covered with a window shade. At the opening of the reading recitation the shade is rolled up so as to expose but one phrase at a time, then this phrase is quickly erased and a pupil is asked to give it.

## Phonetics

1. Vary the work.

2. Give much drill in finding and naming phonograms in words in their readers. They should be quick to discover them. A phonogram is a group of letters occurring in the same order in several words;—thus the phonogram, *ing*, occurs in sing, bring, sting, etc., the phonogram, *ail*, occurs in pail, sail, tail, etc.

3. Letters and phonograms may be sounded by the teacher in order, to form a word. Pupils write as she sounds them, then name the word.

4. The teacher pronounces words that are spelled phonetically and the pupils write them from sound.

5. Pupils write all the words they can containing a certain phonogram, in a certain length of time. See which can get most words. No pupil should write a word the meaning of which he does not know.

6. Do not mark out silent letters in words. The pupils will not find them so marked in their books.

7. Use no diacritical marks, for the same reason.

8. When a new phonogram is taught it should be derived from a word which the pupils know by sight;—thus *ick* is derived from the word *chick*.



9. The teacher should know all the common words based on a phonogram, know how many also, so that she shall not be asking pupils to give more words when there are no more to give.

10. Pupils need drill in writing phonograms as pronounced by the teacher.

## Written Language

1. Study to find out what the pupils like best to write about. The pupils should experience the joy of expression.

2. Encourage and put a premium upon original thought and good forms of expression.

3. Third grade pupils write papers from topics which they themselves suggest and arrange. The teacher will need to guide in this.

4. Be sure that the pupils know well the subject matter which they are to write.

5. When pupils are writing do not disturb them to correct mistakes; it interferes with the flow of thought. Corrections will be made later.

6. Lead pupils to spell words for themselves by giving the sounds of letters and phonograms which they have learned.

7. Pupils can be taught very early to indent the first line and leave a margin.

8. After a set of papers has been written the teacher should examine them with great care, noting all mistakes. Misspelled words should be corrected in the spelling class. Other mistakes should be written upon the board before class time and corrected by the class during the recitation period. There should be quick, live work done here. It is a very important period.

9. Help the whole class to the spelling of an unfamiliar word, not each pupil separately.

10. If a child notices a mistake in his writing he should not erase but draw one line thru the incorrect word.

11. The teacher should know how to spell every word that the pupil will need to use in writing a composition.

12. If a pupil is not up with his class in Written Language—doing poor work—let him write at the board where mistakes are quickly seen and where the work can be erased and done over. The other pupils may write on paper. When this child catches up with his class he also writes on paper.

13. Pupils should have good upright positions at their desks while writing.

14. Insist upon pupils forming letters correctly. Be watchful about this. Give lessons in correct formation of letters and difficult combinations of letters, as *on, we*.

15. Give strong pupils extra work to do.

16. When pupils write at the board they should take the same places every day, and pass in order to these places.

17. At the end of every month the pupils should compare the work of the present with that of the month or months previous. For this purpose the papers are dated and kept in portfolios.

18. It is well to give pupils the same story at the end of each month of the term. They write, then compare papers to see what progress they have made.

### SPELLING.

1. Give less time to the teaching of easy words than to difficult ones.  
2. Have pupils spell for themselves the words which they are capable of sounding.

3. Pronounce words distinctly. Sometimes give them in sentences if there is danger of their being misunderstood.

4. In writing the word, *their*, give it with a noun, e. g., *their books*. The word *two* is also given with a noun. The word *too* is given in a short sentence, e. g., The birds are singing, too. Or, The book is too large.

5. Do not give the pupils untidy papers on which to write. Cut papers. do not tear them.

6. Teach second and third grade pupils to divide words into syllables. In oral spelling they make a pause between two syllables.

7. If a child misses a word see that he learns to spell *that* word.

8. Vary the spelling exercises. Sometimes dictate short sentences containing the words they have recently learned to spell. This tests their ability to use these words in writing.

### ARITHMETIC.

1. Use concrete material until pupils can think numbers and relations without it.

2. Fix one process at a time. Give sufficient exercise in this process to make it the children's own, then go on to some other.

3. Call on slow pupils often but do not keep them reciting long.

4. Be sure that your pupils image correctly and fully each problem. Test them sometimes by asking them to make sketches, showing the conditions of the problem.

5. Each child should feel that every problem is addressed to him. He should solve every one silently, then one may be called upon to give the result or to solve it orally. The teacher must keep still and not interrupt the children's thinking.

6. The problems given by the teacher should be made about things in which the pupils are interested and should give values as they really exist: e. g., the prices of marbles should be those asked at the stores.

7. Pupils should be encouraged to bring in many problems answering to the foregoing description. Sometimes these problems may be centered in a grocery store, sometimes in a fruit store, etc. This gives unity to the work. The other members of the class solve these problems.

8. Connect what the pupils do with the written form for expressing it.
9. When using Kindergarten sticks for teaching number facts the sticks used by a child should all be of one color and of one length.
10. Pupils should be trained to give the name of a unit as well as the number, e. g., *two quarts* not simply *two*.
11. After facts have been discovered by the pupils, *fix* them. Review until there seems no danger of losing them, then review occasionally ever after.
12. In reviews if a child misses a number fact, e. g., six plus seven, it is the business of the teacher to come back to this fact again and again in different ways until it *is fixed*. Do not give another fact until this one comes easy.
13. Domino cards for drill in addition should have the circles grouped in the same way on all the cards. This shows good grouping:—



The pupils should be able to recognize the groups instantly before they are asked to combine them. The numbers are written on the back of

the cards so that the teacher does not need to turn the card to know what groups are there, e. g.:

2 1 6 9  
3 4 5 8.

14. When the domino cards are used do not move the card when holding it before the children. Expose it a moment and give each pupil but one trial. Give a short drill with these cards every day.
15. Fix the multiplication tables. Pupils should be able to give the facts in order, first, then out of order, without hesitation. Do not drill long at a time, but a little every day.
16. Children should be trained to see large numbers in groups instead of singly, e. g., 48 as 4—12's; 50 as 5—10's.

## DRAWING

1. Pupils should have a clear image of what they are to draw before they begin to draw.
2. Usually ask pupils how an object should be drawn instead of saying, "Draw it this way."
3. Set problems for the pupils to work out from observation and by experimentation, e. g.: Pupils are to draw a front view of Katherine, standing, with a basket upon her arm. How represent her feet as you see them? Pupils work this out at the board until the joy of conquest is theirs. Show how she is holding the basket, etc.
4. Careful preparation is needed before a drawing of one who is posing is made, e. g.: Before the pupils draw a picture of a boy chasing his hat, the pupils notice how the boy's body reaches forward, where the bend of the

body comes, the position of the right leg, of the left leg, of the right arm, of the left arm, the head. Sometimes it is well for them to sketch the parts as they notice them, then make the whole sketch.

5. After the drawings are made they may be put up before the class. The class examine and criticise, showing where one representation is well done, and in what respects another falls short, then they may have an opportunity to make better drawings.

6. Pupils should never be asked to make drawings over unless they see clearly how to better them.

7. If pupils lack a color which they need let them make it without the teacher's help, from the colors which they have. They test the colors on bits of paper.

8. In paper cutting train pupils to cut in such a way as to save paper.

9. The objects cut from paper should be for a use which appeals to the child, e. g.: Candies and cookies are not cut simply to teach pupils how to cut circles, but for use in playing store.

10. Encourage the pupils to plan valentines, etc., by themselves.

11. After the pupils have done their best, the teacher should often draw for them, but they had better not copy her drawing.

## NATURE STUDY

1. Get pupils to observe freely out of doors and report their observations in class.

2. Lead pupils to bring in material for class use.

3. Lead children to ask questions about things which they see when making an excursion or when away from school.

4. After an excursion review what they saw to find what they learned and what their chief interests are.

5. Give questions that will set the pupils to thinking about the why, e. g.. Why is it well that the leaves fall in autumn?

6. The lessons upon a subject should be connected in thought, e. g., in studying the cow the central ideas may be the usefulness of the cow and the care which we should give it.

7. Connect Nature Songs, Poems, Games, and Stories with Nature Study making them a part of the lesson. e. g.: Connect the story of "The Fir Tree" with the study of the fir; the poem, "My Shadow," with the study of shadows; the song, "Poor Dog Bright," with the study of the cat or the dog.

8. When at all possible have a specimen of a seed, a flower, etc., for each child to study.

9. The pupils should study their specimens carefully and tell all they can find out by themselves, then the teacher should ask questions to get the pupils to observe more closely and systematically.



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